COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

BUDGET SESSION OF 1102.

Friday, the $\frac{\textit{13th of Karkadagam 1102.}}{\textit{29th of July 1927.}}$

The fifth meeting of the budget session commenced in the Town Hall at 11-30 a. m., the Diwan presiding. The absentees were Messrs. Lonappan Chakkola, K. Krishna Menon, Poulo Mampilli, P. Munda Vaidyan, J. T. Murray, K. S. Rama Ayyar and K. Sankaran Nambudiri.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The assignment of Puduval, etc., lands.

65. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to inform.—

(a) whether the Government have passed any orders to assign *puduval* and *poramboke* lands to the so-called untouchables in preference to other classes of people; and if so, whether a copy of it will be placed on the table; and if no such order has been passed until now,

(b) what is the reason for the delay to pass such orders and help the so-called untouchables;

(c) whether any order has been issued till now to keep in all villages a list of those lands that will be available for assignment to the so-called untouchables?

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—(a) No. The latter part of the question does not arise.

(b) The Member is referred to the answer to question No. 326 of the legislative session of 1102. The Government are fully alive to the fact that the welfare of the "so-called untouchables" is as much their concern as it is of anybody else. They do not, however, consider it expedient to pass any order now giving them preferential claims. All applications from them for lands are receiving sympathetic consideration. As a concession to them the affixing of court fee stamps is not insisted on to their applications.

(c) The matter is still under consideration.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Have the Government any objection to follow the practice now being followed in Travancore?

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Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—The enquiry is not yet complete on the matter. After hearing from them as to what they are doing, we will try to follow it.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Have they passed any order that a list of *puduval* and *porambóke* lands should be kept in all Village Offices, so that preference may be given to the depressed classes in assigning lands.

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—We have no lands available for assignment. We can have it only after the forest exclusion survey is over. If that is over, we will do it.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—So no lands are assigned now to any classes of people?

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—*Poromboke* lands, here and there, when applied for, are inspected, and, if found unobjectionable, are assigned. There is, strictly speaking, no land available for assignment. Lands available for assignment are assessed wastes, and we have no such lands now.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Whether those lands which are now assigned could not be assigned to the depressed classes in preference to others?

President.—That is to say, you have now got certain *porambokes* available for assignment, and they are, according to the applications of parties, assigned. Since there was no opposition from the depressed classes, Government did not consider that there was any objection in assigning such *porambokes*. The question asked is whether such *porambokes* should not be made available for assignment to these depressed classes.

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—They are made available, and, if applied for, they are given. For example, last week lands were given from the backwater area for about 20 families in the Tekkumbagham village. They applied for it, and they were readily given.

President.—That is to say, in suitable cases, when applications come from the depressed classes, assignments are made to them. Can you not say that?

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—Certainly.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Preference should be given to them; that is all what I want.

President.—I do not know whether a question of competition between a person belonging to the depressed class and another belonging to another section has ever come.

Mr. P. Damodara Menon.—Depressed classes were given preference.

President.—The question of preference comes in this way. If a depressed class person and another person were to apply for

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the same land, then there is the scope for applying the rule of preference. Was there a case in which they were not given preference, and preference was given to somebody else?

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—In answer to a question put last time the Government had given a list containing the areas assigned to different classes of people, and in that few acres of land are seen assigned to the depressed classes, whereas large areas are given to other classes of people.

President.—Should they not come with the application? How else can we assign lands to them?

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—They ought to be encouraged to bring in applications.

President.—You should encourage.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I do encourage. From the statement it will be seen that they are not given any encouragement to put in applications. When we consider their population with the area of land available, I think they should be given more.

President.—Practical instances must be referred to here. A general statement will not suffice. "In a particular case such and such a man belonging to the depressed class applied for the assignment of a particular land. He was not given. It was given to somebody else. Is this the encouragement you give to the depressed classes?" That would appeal to us, and then, you should bring pressure upon the Government to do the right thing. You should bring in such practical instances.

Mr. K. Govinda Menon.—I shall also give an instance where encouragement has been given by the Government to the depressed classes. Lands in the Kodasseri Reserved Forests are being leased out to the depressed classes. More than 100 acres of land have been leased out to the depressed classes, one acre for each man. We do not give them assignments of these lands for many reasons mentioned by me on a previous occasion; they might assign these lands to some other person.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to place a list of such lands available for assignment in all the Revenue villages of the State as is being done in Travancore?

President.—That question does not arise.

66. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(a) whether the Government have enquired that in Travancore any Pulaya or Pariah can occupy a *pudual* land and making some improvements in it, can claim them for himself, and in all Village Offices a list of land available is published;

(b) whether the Government will adopt this course for helping the so-called depressed classes in our State?

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